ISFSI

INSTRUCT-O-GRAM

THE HANDS-ON TRAINING GUIDE FOR THE FIRE INSTRUCTOR

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Forcible Entry

TASK

Before you can extinguish the fire, search for a victim, or rescue those who are trapped, you first must be able to get into a structure. With crime on the increase in all areas of the country, firefighters are finding that the days of "kicking in the door" are gone. With steel doors replacing wooden ones and multiple locking mechanisms, firefighters are finding it tougher to gain access. With a working knowledge of forcible entry techniques, access to structures can be gained safely, quickly, and usually with minimal effort and damage.

OBJECTIVES

1. The student will be able to perform an adequate size-up of a building for forcible entry.
2. The student will be able to identify the various types of doors, windows, and locking mechanisms involved when making forcible entry.
3. The student will be able to describe the "rules" of forcible entry.
4. The student will be able to demonstrate safely gaining entry into a structure.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS

1. Essentials of Fire Fighting Video: *Forcible Entry*
2. Pictures of various types of doors, windows, and lock mechanisms
3. Television and VCR
4. Forcible entry simulator or acquired structure for practical evolutions

ESTIMATED TEACHING TIME

This program should take approximately 1½ - 2 hours depending on the size of the class.

PRESENTATION

I. Forcible Entry – Definition

A. Technique used by firefighters to gain access to a structure whose normal means of access is locked, blocked, or non-existent

1. Forcing doors or windows for entry into the building
2. Forcing interior doors
3. Can include forcing security gates to access the property

II. Forcible Entry Decision Criteria

A. Damage vs. Urgency

1. The degree of damage caused should be consistent with the danger to life and damage to the property by the fire
2. Public relations can become a problem when you destroy a $1000 door for a faulty smoke detector

B. How fast do we need to get in?

1. Forced entry should be preformed with speed and minimal damage
2. Need for speed of entry should be the overriding concern when:
   a. You need to gain entry to save a life
   b. To cut off fire spread

III. Types of Door, Lock and Window Assemblies

A. Four Classifications of Doors
1. Swinging doors (inward or outward)
   a. Residential access doors usually swing inward
   b. Commercial access doors usually swing outward (code requirement)
   c. This is not always true - size-up the door
2. Sliding doors
   a. Slide to the left or right on metal tracks
   b. Commonly found as patio doors
   c. Heavy tempered glass panels
   d. May be barred by burglar block
      - Metal or wood bars that prevent the door from sliding
3. Overhead doors
   a. Sectional
   b. Pivoting
   c. Roll-up
4. Revolving doors
   a. Panic proof
   b. Drop arm
   c. Metal-braced

B. Types of Locks
1. Mortise lock
   a. Latches and deadbolt all in one unit
2. Bored (Cylindrical) lock
   a. Key-in-knob lock
3. Rim locks
   a. The most pry resistant type of lock
4. Padlocks
   a. Many types
   b. Can be found anywhere

C. Types of Windows
1. Double – Hung (checkrail)
2. Hinged (casement)
3. Projected (factory)
4. Awning and jalousie

IV. Forcible Entry Tools

A. Types of Tools
1. Cutting tools
   a. Hand tools
      1) Axe — Cutting through wood, shingles and other lightweight materials
      2) Handsaw — Effective in tight spaces and for precision cuts
      3) Bolt cutter — Effective for small metal bars, padlocks, and cables
      4) Gas/electric/battery powered tools — Allow for rapid cutting of a variety of materials
         - Chain saw
         - Circular saw
         - Reciprocating saw
         - Cutting torch
2. Prying tools
   a. Manual prying tools
      1) Have many names and many varieties
      2) Utilize mechanical advantages to force objects to move
         - Halligan bar
         - Pry bar
         - Crowbar
   b. Hydraulic prying tools
      1) Function similar to hand tools with much more power
         - Rescue spreader
         - Rabbit/Porta-Power
3. Pushing/Pulling tools
   a. Not many uses
   b. Extends reach of the firefighter
      - Pike pole
      - Plaster hook
      - Drywall rake
4. Striking tools
   a. Usually used with other tools
   b. Striking other tools to force them into place
      - Sledge hammer
      - Battering ram
      - Flat-head axe
5. Special tools
   a. Usually used with other tools
   b. Cause less damage
      - K-tool, A-tool, J-tool
      - Shove knives
      - Lock breakers

B. Using forcible entry tools
1. No one tool is effective for cutting all materials

2. Understanding the proper uses of the tools will:
   a. Aid in appropriate selection of the tools needed
   b. Make the work safer, quicker, and easier
3. Type of structure determines type of tools
   a. Residential may use
      - Irons pack (flat-head axe and halligan)
      - Pike poles
   b. Commercial may require
      - Irons pack (sledge hammer and halligan)
      - Portable hydraulic tools
      - Bolt cutters

V. Forcible Entry Techniques

A. Non-destructive Rapid entry
B. Conventional methods
   1. Through doors and windows
      a. Breaking glass
      b. Forcing doors
         - Swing/double swing doors
         - Tempered glass doors
         - Roll-up doors
   2. Through the lock method
   3. Through padlocks
C. Unconventional methods
   1. Barred/screened windows and doors
   2. Breaching walls and floors

VI. Size-Up

A. The Fire Building
   1. What is the occupancy?
      a. Helps to determine life hazards and fire load
      b. Amount of forcible entry needed
      c. Type of tools and techniques that may be needed
   2. Where are the occupants?
      a. Are they threatened by the fire?
      b. Is forced entry required for rescue?
   3. Where is the fire?
      a. Where is it located?
      b. What is it doing?
      c. Where is it going?
   4. What is happening to the building?
      a. What is the construction type?
      b. What are the smoke and fire conditions?
      c. Are there signs of potential collapse?
   5. How do we get in?
      a. Use the doors that occupants would normally use
      b. Chances are they are less secured than other doors
   6. How do we get out?
      a. If things get bad and we need to exit quickly
      b. Will forced entry be needed for FF escape routes?
B. Size-up the Escape Routes (victims and firefighter)
   1. Are they blocked and need forced?
      a. Metal bars or gates on windows and doors
      b. Chained panic hardware
      c. High security locks
C. Size-up the doors and windows to be forced
   1. Is fire near the door/window?
   2. Type of door/window to be forced?
      a. Wood, metal, or glass
      b. Front door or back door, commercial or residential
         - Rear doors most often most secured
   3. What is doorjamb set in?
      a. Brick, wood, or other material
      b. Breeching may be easier than forcing some doors
D. Size-up the Locking Mechanisms
   1. How many and what type?
      a. Seeing several locks in a row may tell you to find an easier way in.
   2. Location of the locks
      a. Most normal devices are located 1-3 inches from the edge of the door.
      b. Locks in the center of the door may indicate an unconventional locking mechanism.
   3. Bolts or mounting hardware indicating special locks
      a. Drop bars, fox locks, multi-lock doors
      b. The area the building is located in may give some indication of the amount of security being used.

VII. Rules of Forcible Entry

A. Try before you pry
   1. Don't waste time in gaining entry
   2. Don't cause unneeded damage

B. Don't ignore the obvious
   1. Windows in or next to the door
   2. Locations with a Knox-Box system
   3. Owners with keys on scene
      a. Also check with neighbors

C. Use doors that occupants would normally use
   1. People trying to escape may be there
      a. 34% of fire victims are found in sleeping areas
      b. 31% of fire victims are found in escape paths
   2. Doors not normally used can be blocked
      a. By furniture or by storage of machines
      b. Extra security devices may be used

D. Maintain door integrity
   1. Helps control spread of fire and smoke
      a. Until attack crew is ready to advance the line
      b. Slows smoke spread to other areas
      c. To control stairwells for evacuation
   2. Helps control oxygen supply to fire
      a. Fresh air can increase size of fire
      b. Potential for backdraft
   3. Provide an escape route if fire gains control
      a. Closing the door can allow for confinement of the fire
         1) To regroup and re-attack
         2) To evacuate a structure

VIII. Entry into the Structure

A. SAFETY, SAFETY, SAFETY
   1. There can be a lot of fire behind a door with very little visible evidence outside.
      a. Forcible entry should be coordinated with the attack.
   2. Dress in full turnout gear and SCBA
   3. Approach the door from the side
      a. Avoid standing in front of the door
      b. Avoid standing in front of windows by the door
   4. Get everybody out of the way
      a. Make sure nobody else is in front of the door
   5. Crouch or kneel to the side of the door
   6. Check for heat level at doorknob and top of door
   7. Grab the doorknob and try the lock
      a. "Try before you pry"
   8. Give the door a shake if locked
      a. Determining where the resistance is can identify were the locks may be
      b. Determine tool placement
   9. Force entry

RESOURCES

Essentials of Fire Fighting (4th edition), International Fire Service Training Association

Firefighting Principles and Practices (2nd edition), William E. Clark, Fire Engineering Books and Videos, 1991

Forcible Entry Procedures: "The Rules", Mike Lombardo, Captain Buffalo Fire Department, Fire Nuggets.com, March 2000

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The materials in this *Instruct-O-Gram* were developed by Brad Weesner, an 11-year veteran of the City of Mason (OH) Fire Department. Brad is currently certified as a Fire Officer I, Firefighter II and Paramedic.